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PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AS A PROMOTIONAL FACTOR OF LABOUR MARKET

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Abstract

Lisbon strategy of the European Union (EU) and the respective goal for sustainable EU development provides for economically and socially agreed and equal support for the entire society, including everyone individually in the economic, political and social processes through consolidating, integrating and developing the society as well as it is possible.

The labour market of Latvia has changed fast over the last five years and the employment opportunities have increased. Statistics over this period prove that the unemployment level has reduced and the employment has increased.

In recent months Latvia and other countries have been experiencing changes in the economic life. Statistical data in the labour market over the previous quarter prove it. In contrast to the above described, the unemployment level has started to grow but the employment - to reduce. There is a general understanding in the country that labour costs should be reduced. That means not only lowering salaries but also lowering other labour costs. The employers try to reduce labour costs by using part-time employment, split employment or distance employment, e.g. costs related to arranging an office.

In general, when considering employment problems in the country, in their research the authors single out a risk group – people after the maternity leave. Taking into account the current complicated economic conditions, this risk group should be specially protected. When analyzing employee motivation, it can be concluded that salary increase is not always a motivator for this risk group. When analyzing the labour market research, it can be concluded that one of the motivation factors is social guarantees and flexible work hours, especially for that risk group that returns to the labour market after the maternity leave.

The unemployment situation, which has especially intensified recently in the country, attests to the employment problems. Therefore in their research the authors study one of the potential factors promoting the labour market for people after the maternity leave – part-time employment.

The research analyzes and evaluates data of the labour market from 2006-2008. They comprise employment, accounting work hours and unemployment data, emphasizing gender differences. The data analyzed are about people after the maternity leave.

When analyzing part-time employment, a noticeable fact is in what way the country and the employers support the opportunity of being employed part-time. There is an issue in what form and whether at all employers could cooperate with the country to promote part-time employment. At the state level, those would be work and family balance programmes because this is a significant factor to enhance employment — so that people would want and could work. On the part of the country it is also important to provide new parents with places in the kindergartens for their children, so that parents could return to the labour market.

Key words:

Unemployment, part-time employment, maternity leave, integration.

Introduction

Over the last years the labour market in Latvia has been researched much and from different aspects. There were many studies how to facilitate employment in the country. The authors of this researched have looked more deeply at female employment issues and how females are encouraged to return to the labour market after the maternity leave.

Females spend less time in paid employment than males. In the 27 EU Member States, 29% of the employed females work part-time (30 or less hours a week) if compared to only 7% males employed part-time. Males usually work longer hours – including 20% males who

work more than 48 hours a week, which is almost twice as high indicator than for that for females (12%). In Eastern Europe, part-time employment is not frequently met among females, but in Western Europe more than one third of the females work part-time.

In Latvia only 6.4% of the inhabitants work parttime, whereas, e.g. in Norway the total number of people employed part-time is 28%, in Sweden -25%, in Finland -14%, in Denmark -25% and in Holland - even 46%. If we compare Latvia with its neighbours, then in Estonia the indicator is 8.2%, but in Lithuania - 8.6%. (O leja K., 2009)

The **goal** of the research is to analyze the part-time employment factor as an opportunity for successful integration in the labour market after the maternity leave.

To achieve the goal, the following **objectives** were set:

- 1) to analyze the use of part-time employment in EU and Latvia;
- 2) to analyze the legal basis for part-time employment;
- to offer recommendations about the opportunities for integrating part-time employment in the labour market.

The research object is women that return to the labour market after the maternity leave. According to the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, men can also use the paternity leave but the proportion of men who use it is very small, therefore only women were studied. The research applied analysis-synthesis, induction and deduction, graphical, as well as descriptive statistical analysis methods.

The research used data of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) of the Republic of Latvia, Eurostadt data about employment; scientific publications about research on employment and the labour market in Latvia were analyzed; as well as economic and political recommendations to integrate these people in the labour market were looked at.

1. Part-time employment in EU and Latvia

On December 15, 1997 the Council adopted the Directive 97/81/EK on UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe), CEEP (Centre of Employers and Enterprises Providing) and EAC (Eurasian Economic Community) basic agreement on part-time employment. The aim of the Directive is to implement the basic agreement, found in the appendix of the directive, about part-time employment that has been signed between general inter-professional organizations (UNICE, CEEP and EAC).

This basic agreement deepens European employment strategy. The aim of the basic agreement is, first, to ensure that part-time employee discrimination is stopped and

the part-time employment quality of work is improved; second, to facilitate voluntary part-time employment development and to enhance flexible work organization so that both employers and employees' needs are taken into consideration. This document describes the notions 'part-time employee' and the 'comparative full-time employee' and differences between them. To ensure the equality principle in the labour market, Clause 4 of the basic agreement provides the prohibitive principles, e.g. about work conditions, pro rata temporis, etc. This Clause stipulates that every Member State may decide about the procedure of applying it. Likewise, another Clause is devoted to the opportunities of part-time work hours, for example, about the employee opportunities to refuse from part-time employment, about providing information, etc. (EU Directive 97/81/EK "On UNICE 1997)

In Latvia, the work hours are determined by the Labour Law adopted on June 20, 2001 by the Republic of Latvia. This law and other laws and regulations that regulate legal labour relations are binding to all employers, irrespective of their legal status, and to employees if the employer employee legal relations are based on a contract. The legal labour relations are regulated by the Satversme of the Republic of Latvia international legal norms, which are binding for Latvia, this law and also other laws and regulations, as well as the collective agreement and work procedure regulations.

The main functions regulated by the Labour Law are:

- the system of employment rights and its basic principles;
- employee independence;
- international employment rights;
- terms;
- collective agreement;
- contract;
- establishing legal labour relations;
- employee liabilities;
- remuneration;
- employee duties and rights;
- terminating the legal labour relations;
- work and leisure time.

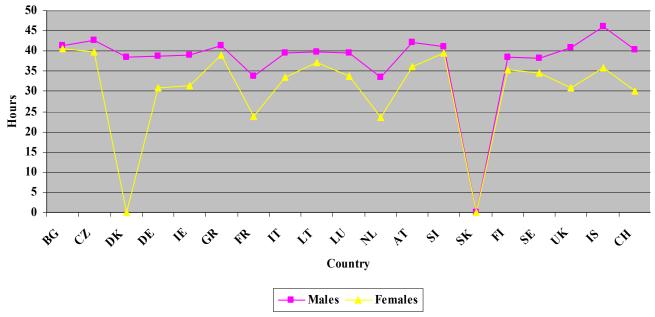
The law stipulates who and in what way shall be determined part-time work hours. First, in the contract the employer and the employee may agree on part-time employment hours that are shorter than the regular working day or week. Second, the employer may determine part-time work hours if it is required by a pregnant employee, a female employee after the labour up to one year. Third, upon the request of the employee, the employer transfers the employee from full-time to part-time work or vice verse if the company has such a possibility. The part-time employee is the subject to the same regulations as any other employee employed on

regular basis. (Labour Law, 2001)

In 2005 in the study of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia on work hours, part-time employment is classified under the employment with reduced work hours. Sharing the work place, working while studying, and gradual retirement are also included in the same group. They all, in fact, are part-time employment with different specific characteristics. Part-time employment is considered to be employment that is shorter than regular work hours (8 hours a day / 40 hours per week). It is provided already by the contract determining the number of work hours and if necessary, also their division across the week. Most frequently part-time employees work 20-

30 hours a week. Part-time employment can be expressed as both shorter work hours every week and less working days per week. It is especially popular among students. The new parents also like to use it as it allows them to gradually return to the labour market after the maternity leave. (Darba laiks, 2005)

In total, in the European Union 14.2% of all the employed worked part-time in 1992, but in 2002 this indicator was already 18.1%. Only in Denmark a decrease in the proportion of part-time employees was observed over this period. The spread of part-time employment differs in the Member States of the European Union. For example, in the Netherlands, about 40% of the employed are part-time employees while in Greece – only 4.5%.



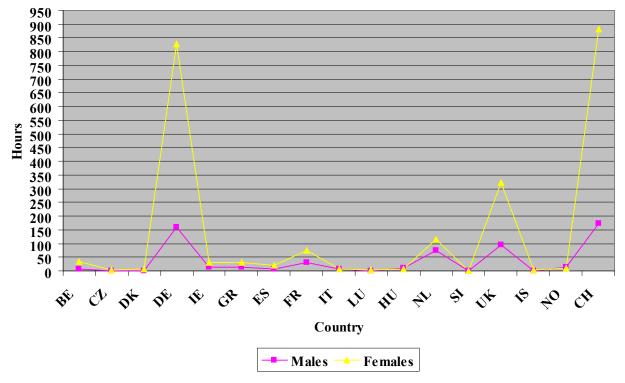
Source: Designed by the author based on Eurostat..., 2009

Fig. 1. Weekly work hours in the EU in 2004, hrs.

From the data on Eurostadt web page it can be concluded that not all the countries have made the data available, e.g. Estonia, Latvia, a.o. In total, in 2004 people in the EU worked 37.2 hours a week on average. Figure 1 presents data according to the gender. In 2004 in the EU males worked 39.7 hours on average, which is above the total average for all the employees, but females worked 33.9 hours on average, which attests that part-time employment would be one of the promotional factors for females, especially when they return to the labour market after the maternity leave. In contrast, in Latvia males worked 41.3 hours on average, but females worked 37.4 hours on average in 2004. (Nostrādātās stundas ..., 2004)

There are more females who work part-time (in 2002 in the European Union the proportion of all females working part-time was 5 times bigger than that of all males). This difference is especially visible in Luxemburg (even 14 times more females than males), as well as in Austria and Germany but it is less felt in the Nordic countries. If the age is considered, it can be seen that mostly people in the retirement age and young people in the age of 15-24 work part-time. There are many females, age 25-65, who work part-time when males mostly work full-time.

In the new Member States and the candidate states of the European Union part-time employment is not that widespread. In 2002 in all these countries only 7.8% in total were part-time employees and, in fact, in 2001 the indicator was higher – 9.8% (Rumania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Check Republic, Slovakia, Estonia and Latvia were among the countries where the proportion of part-time employment reduced in 2002). In 2002 most part-time employed were in Rumania (11.4%), Poland (10.7%0 and Lithuania (9.8%), but least – in Slovakia (1.9%), Bulgaria (3.1%) and Hungary (3.6%).



Source: Designed by the author based on Eurostat..., 2009

Fig. 2. Use of full-time employment in EU in 2004, hrs.

According to the report of the European Commission on the employment, in 2003 in European Union 25% of the employees had flexible work hours, i.e. they had the opportunity to choose the time they begin and end their work day. In France, Germany, Ireland and Great Britain more than 50% of the employees used one of the flexitime forms. In Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia less than 10 employees had such a chance. On average in the European Union flexi-time work models are available to 20% of the employees. (Darba laiks, 2005)

In contrast, the Employers' Confederation in Norway admit that three principles should be combined competitiveness, socially acceptable circumstances and the followers' and it requires cooperation between the government, employers and social partners. More attention was paid to setting up kindergartens, to flexible work hours, maternity leaves, youth policy, in other words, a family-friendly policy. (Laiks darbam un ..., 2006) The Labour Law in Latvia provides, for example, a 10 day paid paternity leave for the fathers and the opportunity to use an additional 3 day vacation (for parents who have 3 or more children or whose child is handicapped). In this matter the State Employment Agency offers the pre-retirement and retirement age people to acquire the education of an au pair, a home help, a baby sitter, etc. or e-training for unemployed mothers after the maternity leave.

2. Statistical indicators of part-time employment in Latvia

As females do most of the household duties, take care of the children and also the dependent grown-ups, they have the longest total work week, especially if they are employed full-time. The main reason is the unequal division of the unpaid household duties among the genders. Although part-time employment offers a small advantage, females still work longer in total than males who are employed full-time do.

Therefore, although part-time employment often is supported as a measure to balance work and family life, in total females who have such a division of work usually work longer than males do.

According to the data of the CSB, in Latvia it is males who more work full-time: from 2005 till 2007 on average it was 94.7% of all the employed males but only 91.0% of all the employed females, which is for 3.7% less. However, taking into consideration the average indicators among the part-time employed, this tendency is absolutely opposite: 5.3% for males on average, but 9.0% for females. Analyzing the data of 2007 against the data of 2005, it can be seen that in this three-year period the number of the full-time employed has a tendency to increase: by 1.5% for males but by 2.6% for females. However, the number of the part-time employed has a tendency to decrease: by 1.6% for males and by 2.6% for females. According to the authors, people do not feel secure when working part-time, which is especially

Table 1. The proportion of males and females employed full-time and part-time in Latvia from 2005 – 2007, %

Indicators		2005		2006		2007		2007/2005	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Full-time employees	93,6	89.4	95.3	91.6	95.1	92.0	1.5	2.6	
Part-time employees	6.4	10.6	4.7	8.4	4.8	8.0	-1.6	-2.6	
including									
studied, were on training or in internships	12.1	9.6	9.5	10.7	20.1	18.2	8.0	8.6	
sickness, disability	4.5	3.7	4.5	3.7	9.1	4.1	4.6	0.4	
could not find full-time job	43.7	30.6	43.7	28.8	21.5	20.5	-22.2	-10.1	
did not want full-time job	14.2	19.6	14.5	17.0	17.1	16.6	2.9	-3.0	
took care of one's own child/children		12.1		7.0		7.4		-4.7	
due to other personal or family reasons	11.8	14.1	15.2	15.1	19.3	18.0	7.5	3.9	
other reasons	13.7	10.4	12.6	17.6	12.0	14.2	-1.7	3.8	

Source: Designed by the authors, based on the data of the CSB, 2009

expressed among females. It is important to analyze why people choose to work part-time. A significant reason for working part-time among males in 2007 was sickness or disability, which had grown by 4.6% if compared to 2005. However, for females the reasons in 2007 were studying, training or internship, which had increased by 0.4% if compared to 2005. The research revealed that one of the most significant part-time employment reasons was taking care of children. During the threeyear period males did not have it as a reason to choose part-time employment. However, it was a significant reason for 12.1% females in 2005 and for 7.4% in 2007. If compared to 2005, in 2007 this reason had reduced by 4.7% for females. However, on average 8.8% of females mentioned taking care for children as a reason. In the authors' opinion, if the country promoted combining work and family life, the percentage would be lower.

In the new Member States the difference between the division of male and female work time is significant. Males work longer hours there and part-time employment is more and more related to female employment.

The employment exhibits an expressed gender inequality: in some types of work females are represented in bigger numbers, in other – in too small numbers if compared to the total number of work they have.

Differences in work conditions (labour environment, type of work and its organization, as well as subjugation to physical risks) for males and females arise from work division according to the gender and from the fact that females work part-time more frequently than males. For example, part-time employees do not receive such help and social support than full-time employees and they are less frequently involved in team work. Females who work in manufacturing more frequently perform monotonous tasks than others. In addition, although employees in manufacturing have less opportunities for training, females are even more deserted in this category – nine

out of ten females employed in manufacturing reported that they had had no chance for training over the previous year.

Employees' advantages if they work part-time:

- more free time to spend on out-of work interests (incl. education, social activities, hobbies);
- for the youth the opportunity to get included in the labour market, to get practice along with the studies;
- the opportunity to stay in the market for those people who have significant out-of work duties (for example, care for children or other people).
- Employers' advantages if employees work parttime:
- the company at least partly may maintain skills and competencies of such people who have significant family, etc. duties;
- the opportunity to divide duties in the company more optimally (for example, if execution of specific functions does not require full-time work, a part-time employee may be hired for doing it, thus saving resources).

The fact that in some work places (especially the ones where team work is required) partial presence of the employee may make other colleague's work more difficult should be mentioned as a drawback. (Darba laiks, 2005)

Employment problems in Latvia interact with attracting employees in the country, and that is approved by the research "The Impact of Objective and Subjective Factors on Attracting Inhabitants to Small Towns and Rural Territories of Latvia". During the research deep interviews with the inhabitants of small towns were carried out. Territories for the research were selected based on several criteria: territories located far from Riga (more than 100 km), territories that are not located close to employment centres (biggest cities of Latvia)

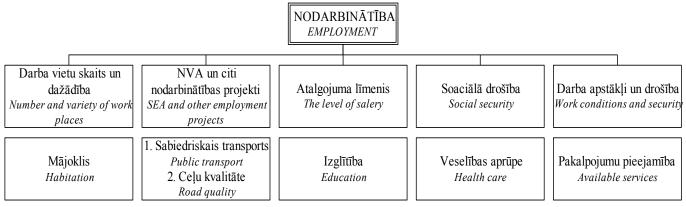
(farther than 20 km), territories which have the status of specially supported territories that are close to the border of Latvia (land and sea). Six small towns of Latvia with the surrounding territories were chosen – Piltene, Pavilosta, Ape, Dagda, Akniste, Viesite, which according to the Administrative Territorial Reform could become the new area centres. Mainly respondents admitted to employment problems. Interviews were carried out with different groups of inhabitants in all the chosen small towns, as well as in their surrounding territories.

Summarizing the results of the interview, it is possible to distinguish the potential problem groups:

1) the ones directly related to the employment: job

- offers, remuneration, work and social security;
- problems that are indirectly related but affecting the employment: migration, gender and age stereotypes, formal and informal impact of social networks.

Attractiveness is related to employment opportunities. SEA and other employment projects mention the number and variety of work places, the salary level, social security and work conditions and security as significant features characterizing employment. (Saulāja I., Rasnača L., ..., 2007) The summary of factors affecting employment in small towns is presented in Figure 3.



Source: Saulāja I., Rasnača L., ..., 2007 Source: Saulāja I., Rasnača L., ..., 2007

Fig. 3. The factors affecting employment in small towns in Latvia

Employment is affected by indirect factors, such as habitation, public transport and the quality of roads, education, health care, available services. New specialists do not come to small towns where they cannot purchase a separate habitation for an acceptable price, where there are no schools and pre-school educational establishments, etc.

The authors of this research pay special attention exactly to work conditions and work security because those are directly related to the risk group under study-people after the maternity leave. In Latvia work security comprises such factors as physical safety (conditions in the work place), job security, receiving salary in a timely manner (*Tautas attīstība*, 2002).

People in Latvia do not feel secure about their work or family. The deep interviews prove it. One of the representatives of Viesite municipality stated that living in Latvia, you do not feel secure about yourself and your family. He considers that the state requires everyone to grow and develop with the time but everything is changing so fast that it is impossible to follow. He offers the state to support inhabitants' education and qualification improvement.

What concerns social security, the situation in Latvia should be compared with the one in Estonia. Many respondents from Vidzeme region stated that in Estonia the employment situation is better. For example, an employee from Ape municipality claimed that many people work in Estonia because companies in Latvia are liquidated due to the high costs. The respondent also said that in Estonia both the minimum salary is bigger and the attitude towards people is different, which is expressed as, e.g. mandatory health insurance, and thus people feel more socially secure.

In the situation in Latvia it is characteristic that population (labour force) migration is mostly facilitated by the economic conditions. The salary is the main but not the only reason. The job safety level is dropping in the small towns of Latvia like in any other country that is going through the transition period in economics and where the unemployment level is high. The employees very often have no opportunities to demand increasing the job safety in the company and any initiative in raising the job safety and improving working conditions may not gain support or might even be disapproved of. In such a case the employee has to make a decision whether to continue to work in the company or to look for new alternative forms of employment. Looking for new employment alternatives in the best case may be time consuming, in the worst case – may add the employee to the number of the unemployed or result in too long time spent looking for job.

3. Need of part-time employment – kindergartens

One of the reasons why females choose part-time employment more is the family and children. Although the legislation allows the parents to choose who uses the maternity leave, mainly it is chosen by females.

In the authors' opinion, one of the reasons why parttime employment in Latvia should be more promoted is the insufficient number of pre-school educational establishments or kindergartens. Children are to be queued up for the place in the kindergarten which many parents do not even get until the child starts attending school

Figure 2 allows concluding that there are several factors in the labour market that either hinder or promote the return to the labour market after the maternity leave. The authors consider that one of the factors that affect this integration is the existence of kindergartens. (see Table 2)

Table 2. Pre-school educational establishments in Latvia from 2005 – 2007

Indicators	2005	2006	2007	2007/2005 (%)
Number of pre-school educational establishments		557	564	2.0
Number of children in pre-school educational establishments, th.		77	79	5.3
Number of children pre-school educational establishments in percentage from the number of children of the age $1-6$		63		

Source: Designed by the authors, based on the data of the CSB

Table 2 data allow concluding that the number of children is growing in pre-school educational establishments: in 2007, if compared to 2005, it increased by 5.3%. At the same time the number of pre-school educational establishments increased by 2.0%. The authors conclude that the increase in the number of

children was more than twice bigger than in the number of pre-school educational establishments.

From 2005 till 2008 the number of children in preschool educational establishments increased by 5.7%. (see Table 3)

Table 3. The number of children in pre-school educational establishments in Latvia (at the beginning of the study year) from 2005 – 2007

Study year	Total number of children	Pre-school educational institutions (September 1)	Proportion in the total number of children
2005/2006	547346	74968	13.7
2006/2007	527086	77278	14.7
2007/2008	509833	79253	15.5

Source: Author's calculations based on the data of the CSB

The authors conclude that the number of children in pre-school educational establishments exhibits a tendency to grow, starting from the study year 2005/2006 – for 3.1 and 2.6% respectively. Table 3 exhibits that the proportion of the children studying in pre-school educational establishments is 13.7 - 15.5% and it is growing every year. However, the total number of children exhibits a declining tendency (-6.9%). It means that the number of children who need kindergartens has increased over this period.

Conclusions

1. On December 15, 1997 the Council adopted the Directive 97/81/EK on UNICE, CEEP and EAC basic agreement on part-time employment. Its goal is to implement the basic agreement on part-time employment which supplements the Directive and

which has been signed by general inter-professional organizations (UNICE, CEEP un EAC).

- 2. In 27 Member States of EU, 29% of the employed females work part-time (30 or less hours a week) if compared to only 7% of the males who work part-time. In Latvia it is males who are more employed full-time: from 2005 till 2007 on average 94.7% of all the employed males, but 91.0% of all the employed females, which is for 3.7% less. The number of part-time employed has a tendency to decrease for males by 25.0%, but for females for 24.5%.
 - 3. In Latvia, part-time employment is not sufficiently promoted. Taking into account the insufficient number of pre-school educational establishments, state institutions should take informative measures to inform society about such opportunities.

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